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The Key to Future TV Growth: Develop Developing Markets

The presence of so many companies at NATPE Europe in Prague (see related story below) is a testament, if any were needed, to the growing importance of the world's emerging markets. But assessing which of these markets offer the best potential, and deciding how to cost-effectively maximize the immediate returns while also growing the longer-term market potential calls for fine decisions.

In relation to NATPE Europe, EMEA TV sales executives could easily identify more than 40 territories as emerging countries, which *VideoAge* estimates represent a \$2.5 billion



a year total TV content acquisition market right now.

For Mark Benmore, vice president of Distribution at U.K.-based Content Television and Digital, research is at the heart of a successful approach

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Branded Content in Italy: Many Brands, No Content



The art of financing media content is a difficult one, and the idea of getting corporations to foot a portion of the bill isn't new. Product placement is one of the oldest hats in the film and television industry, and branded content is becoming increasingly

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Middle Eastern TV: Rotana is a Saudi family tree of channels

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U.S. studios screen new TV season at NATPE Europe

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Prague Brings New Hope To NATPE Europe



NATPE Europe (formerly known as NATPE Budapest, and before that DISCOP East), the international content market with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), has a new name and a new location. The content market has abandoned ship in Budapest and set down new roots in Prague.

Rod Perth, president and CEO of the Los Angeles-based NATPE, which organizes the Prague market and the Latin-focused sister event in Miami, said that the move to

(Continued on Page 26)

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Many brands, but no content*



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My 2¢

International TV execs put up with market organizers' bureaucracy, client/supplier relationships, poor hotel services and culture shock. But worst of all are the unavoidable airlines



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Aereo and Magine: Same OTT, Different Model

Dear Editor:

The case between Aereo and American broadcasting companies naturally casts light on the whole OTT TV industry, with commentators, the public and industry professionals alike discussing the merits of the system at large [Re: VideoAge My 2¢ Editorial, April 2014]. The problem with this, however, is that inadvertently all services are being bundled together, as if they all act in the same way.

While Magine uses the same OTT system, our practices are different [from Aereo]. We have shown it is possible, and preferential, to work with the existing TV industry — especially its broadcasters — rather than seeking to disrupt it. Importantly, we believe a partnership between the existing system and new cloud technologies is essential for the long-term future of TV, for companies on either side of the cloud.



A key thing is that programs cost money and people who make TV need to get paid. The existent model seeks to do that, keeping revenues within a system. By trying to go outside this, the makers, distributors and creators are not remunerated, and quality as a consequence is likely to go down, or shows disappear. Like the print and music industries, which have fought hard with the reality of revenues being stripped by Internet downloading outside of their systems, TV faces the same dangers.

Instead of putting creativity in jeopardy, Magine hopes that by building partnerships with makers like Disney, Discovery, Fox, CNN International, BBC, Eurosport, National Geographic, Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network, we can help ensure the longevity of the TV sector that we all want to see grow and flourish.

This does not mean we cannot innovate, either. The cloud system allows us to increase the flexibility of our services and enhance the consumer experience. People can view shows across devices, whenever they want, both live and catch-up, without the demands of a strict schedule or fixed location. We have increased the amount of minutes viewers in Sweden watch TV by adapting the service to be as enjoyable as possible, while the industry is sustained.

Throughout our interaction with broadcasters, transparency has been paramount. The first thing we did before going on air with trials was to get written permissions from content owners to use their signals. We then made deals with studios to broadcast their shows in test runs, before securing agreements to launch commercially. As a final step, to ensure clarity all around, and goodwill from within the industry, we contacted the original content owners to ensure they were aware that we would be broadcasting channels that included content licensed by them.

Though it might seem there is only one way to do OTT TV, our experience testifies that this is not the case. Instead of seeing the cloud as disrupting the sector, it can conversely be a means of sustaining TV for the future. It is vital to realize that TV needs the Internet, as much as the Internet needs TV.

Sincerely,
Michael Turner
EVP, Content and New Markets
Magine, Stockholm, Sweden
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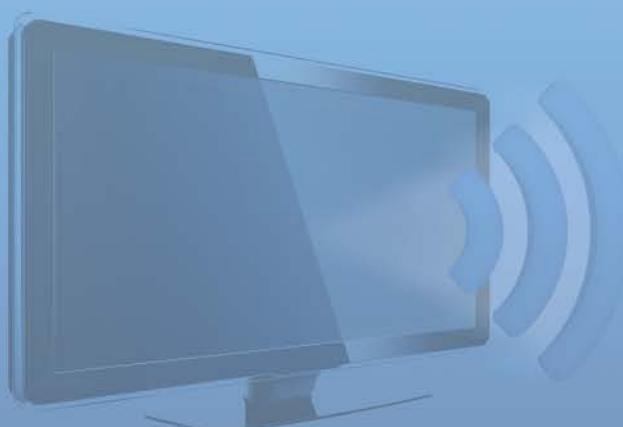
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(Continued from Page 4)

Jornadas: South Cone's Premier TV Trade Show in Argentina

The Argentina Association of Cable Television (ATVC) International Conference 2014, or *Jornadas Internacionales*, will hold its 24th edition from September 17-19 at the Hilton Hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the Argentine cable television industry, a milestone that will be recognized at *Jornadas*.

The event is geared toward the cable and satellite TV industry and draws cable and satellite TV operators from Argentina and the world at large. Among those who make the trip to Buenos Aires are content providers, program distributors, production and post-production companies, equipment suppliers, video animation and service companies and TV consultants. Each year, *Jornadas* features an exhibition floor with content and technology exhibitors, workshops and conferences. Pictured above is the Rai World stand, with Adriana Demjen of All TV, Rai World's exclusive representative for Latin America,



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and a group of visitors.

This year, the Engineers Committee of ATVC will present technical academic conferences. Another full-day conference is the Society of Cable Telecommunications/USA (SCTE). These events are intended to advise cable TV operators and their engineering staff on how to provide better services to their subscribers.

The traditional Educator Day conference will feature keynote speakers from programming companies, shining a spotlight on the latest contributions to education in Argentina and Latin America as a whole. Since 1994, this conference has brought together educators of all levels to give them the opportunity to learn how to use the Internet and TV in their classrooms as educational tools.

Additionally, the Audiovisual District of Buenos Aires city government will present a full-day conference for producers.

Organizers also anticipate a number of social events, though they were unable to announce them at press time.

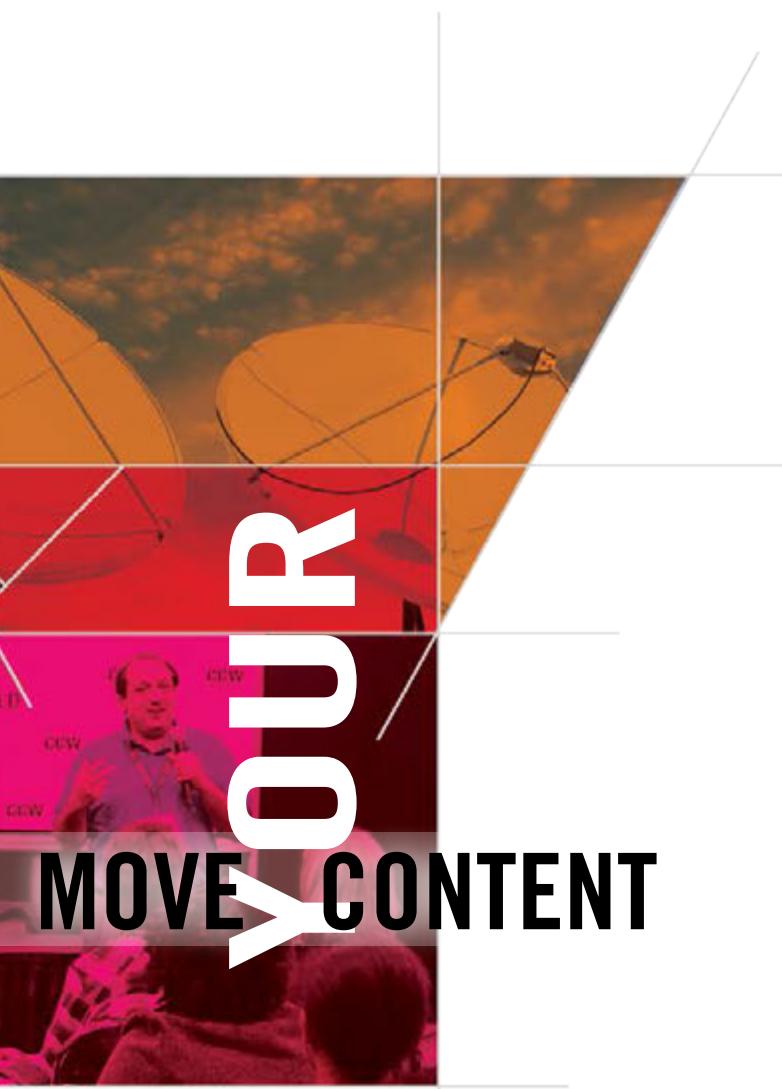
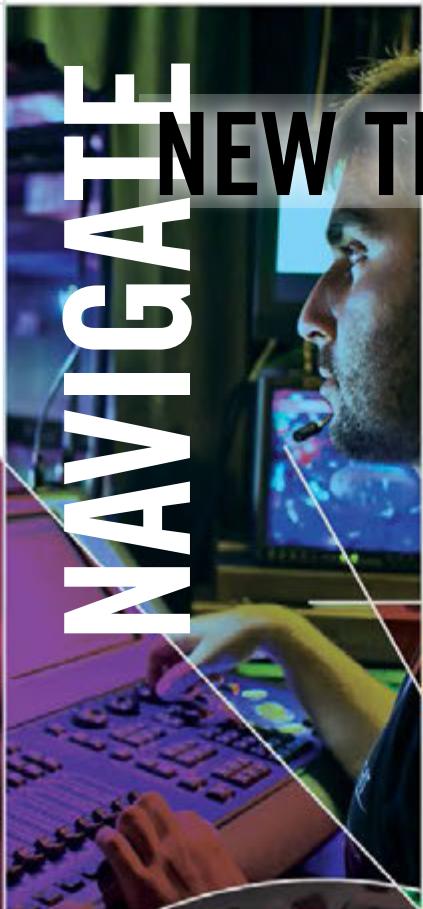
U.S. Cable Upfronts Show CPM Up

The U.S. Cable Upfronts for the 2014-15 season are expected to generate a five percent increase in advertiser commitments, according to FX Network's president of Ad Sales, Lou LaTorre.

The New York City-based Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau reported that last year's cable TV growth during the Upfronts was 4.3 percent, bringing total volume to \$10.2 billion.

As for pricing, LaTorre expects up to eight percent CPM increases for major channels and up to five percent for smaller channels. In addition, it was predicted that over 55 percent of all ad sales revenue for the new season would be booked during the Upfronts, bringing the total annual revenue to about \$26.9 billion compared to last year's \$25.9 billion.

It was also expected that several cable networks would cut C7 deals, instead of negotiating with the standard C3 metrics.



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Perky and Anything But Peaceful: Inside the U.S. Morning Show Wars

When you think of morning shows, you think of hosts that are perky (like Katie Couric, formerly of NBC's *Today*), brainy (like Charlie Rose of CBS *This Morning*) or even hunky (like Josh Elliott, formerly of ABC's *Good Morning America*). You think of cooking segments, playful banter and short bits about overweight housecats. You think of news, sports and the weather. You don't often think ruthless. But if we're to believe Brian Stelter, author of *Top of the Morning: Inside the Cutthroat World of Morning TV* (Grand Central Publishing, 312 pages, \$28), the morning show wars are almost as brutal as the battles that have been fought for God or country for centuries.

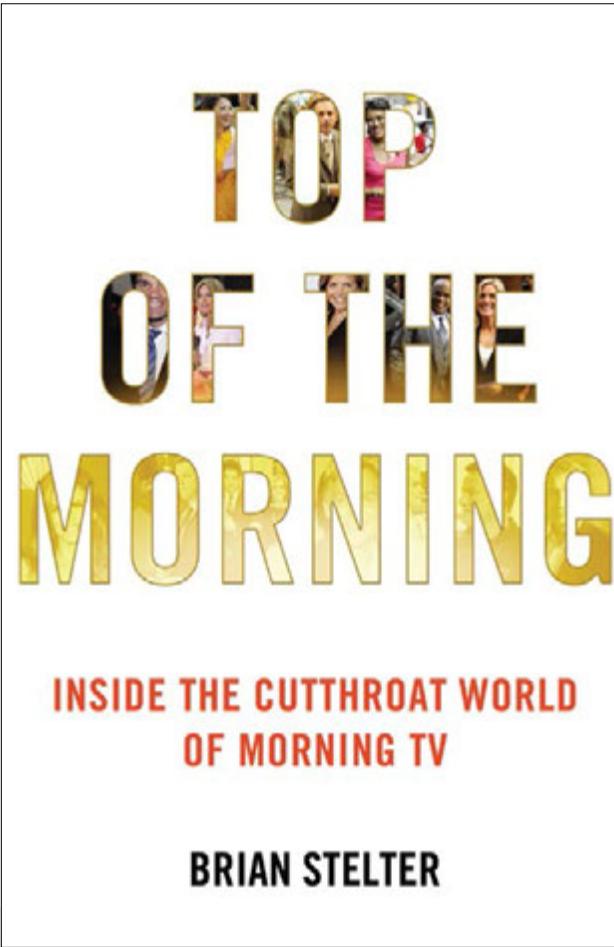
A media correspondent for CNN (who wrote *Top of the Morning* while working for *The New York Times*), Stelter chronicles sordid tales of flagrant guest poaching by shameless bookers, internal brouhahas over whether news content or fluff should reign supreme and the little ways that sleep-deprivation makes practically everyone involved in morning television more than just a little bit kooky. It's a compelling read — whether you're a loyal longtime viewer or someone who only occasionally turns your TV on in the A.M. hoping for a quick rundown of the day's headlines before you head off to work.

Stelter begins with a brief history of the morning talk show. *Today* has been on the air the longest — debuting in January 1952 on NBC with original host Dave Garroway and a chimpanzee mascot named J. Fred Muggs. Gradually, the show morphed from its focus on light news (and chimp-related gimmickry) into the program we know today — one that features a healthy mix of hard news, lifestyle features and interviews with political figures and other newsmakers.

NBC did so well with the show that copycats eventually followed. ABC premiered *Good Morning America* in November of 1975. CBS has aired 10 different shows in the morning slot, including *The Early Show*, which aired from 1999 to 2012, and *CBS This Morning*, which currently airs in the morning hours. At first it was just the Big Three TV networks that were playing the morning show game, but Stelter also devotes a decent-sized chunk of the book to *Morning Joe*, an MSNBC show that debuted in 2007 and features longer-than-average segments and hosts that are more apt to make fun of the lighthearted stories that are the bread and butter of the network shows.

Despite all the impersonators that arrived on the scene, *Today* managed to remain on top for an absurdly long time, dominating the ratings for an unfathomable 852 weeks — that's more than 16 years! — until *Good Morning America* finally took the top spot in April of 2012.

What led to that longtime dominance, Stelter



explains, wasn't the fact that it was the first or the best. He writes: "Today had the upper hand in booking A-list celebrities. It had the clout to insist that a politician talk to [host Matt] Lauer before anyone else. It had the right to call itself 'America's first family.'" In other words, viewers saw the team at *Today* as members of their own family — albeit ones who were better looking, better dressed and better informed on current events than the relatives they dealt with each day.

But nobody can stay on top forever, and in 2012, *Today* managed to alienate a large percentage of its audience with what many saw as the calculated ousting of its newest host, Ann Curry. If viewers tend to pick one morning show over another because the ensemble feels like family, they're not going to like when a family member is humiliated — especially on such a public stage.

The show had previously shown some weakness with swapping hosts in 1989 when it chose to replace Jane Pauley with the less competent Deborah Norville, thereby losing the devotion of a large percentage of female viewers who believed that the seasoned Pauley had been traded in for a newer model. Norville went on maternity leave less than a year into her new hosting duties and never returned.

This time, Curry, who had anchored the *Today* news desk for more than a decade, had only hosted for about a year when certain powers that be at the show decided that she was to blame for

the show's recent decline in ratings. Whether that's true or not is up for debate. It also might have been a result of the extraordinarily good chemistry between *Good Morning America* hosts George Stephanopoulos, Robin Roberts, Lara Spencer and Josh Elliott, who seemed to be having a lot more fun over on ABC.

Stelter devotes nearly a third of the book to this embarrassing chapter in *Today's* history — and frankly, it's too much. While readers might start out feeling badly for Curry, by the end of the sordid tale, they'll want to never ever read another word about her ever again. One hundred pages is simply too much space to dedicate to a single, unfortunate woman's downfall.

Top of the Morning also spends a lot of time on the many health crises faced by *Good Morning America's* Robin Roberts. In 2007, Roberts was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent surgery and a series of chemotherapy treatments. Then, in 2012, she was diagnosed with a bone marrow disease called myelodysplastic syndrome (or MDS). While she took a leave from the show in order to get a bone marrow transplant, she was gone but not forgotten. Her co-workers mentioned her name frequently on air and kept viewers updated about her condition. She went on to beat MDS and returned triumphant (and healthy) to her post in early 2013.

"How calculating the GMA producers were or weren't about Roberts's illness is hard to say," writes Stelter. "Roberts remained more than slightly interested in the overnight ratings, and people at ABC said they took their cues from her about how to cover her illness. She was clearly happy to draw attention to the cause of bone marrow donation...No one could say that a lot of good hadn't come from the network's involvement, yet some people at NBC were whispering about the ways ABC was milking the situation for ratings. The smack-talking truly never stops between the Big Two."

At the moment, *Good Morning America* is up and *Today* is down. But that could all change in a nanosecond. As co-hosts move on for better opportunities and viewers get more of their news from their smartphones than any other source, will people continue tuning in to these old-school morning shows? Stelter certainly doesn't know for sure. But until these sorts of programs officially go the way of the dinosaur, one thing's for certain — they'll duke it out for ratings until their very last breath. **LHR** 



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Rotana Is Not Just A Rare Saudi Tree: It's A Family of Popular Arab TV Channels

At the most recent MIP-TV, VideoAge was approached by Middle Eastern TV consultant Elie Kawakabani to introduce a media group that is not well known outside the Gulf Region, but has an impressive TV channel lineup and audience following: The Rotana Group.

Indeed, the Rotana Group is the Arab World's largest entertainment company owned by Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal. In 2012 Rotana announced that Rupert Murdoch's News Corp exercised 50 percent of its previously announced option in Rotana Group. Under the terms of the agreement, News Corp acquired newly-issued shares in Rotana for \$35 million. The investment took News Corp's total stake in Rotana to 18.97 percent. Previously News Corp had acquired a 14.53 percent stake in the group.

Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, the principal shareholder of the Rotana Group, owns approximately seven percent of News Corp's Class B Common Stock.

To get a sense of the group's impact on the Middle Eastern media scene, VideoAge interviewed Turki Al Shabanah, president of the television business unit of the Riyadh, Saudi Arabia-based Rotana.

Al Shabanah, who was educated in the U.S. and spent some time in Washington, D.C., outlined Rotana's four Arabic TV movie channels, one American film channel; their four international TV channels focusing on the U.S. (Rotana America and LBC America), Europe and Australia; and their Social Islamic TV Channel, aimed at "Preventing extremism in all its forms." This in addition to five general entertainment channels, including FOX Middle East.

He also explained that the word "Rotana" symbolizes a palm tree, more specifically the very rare palm tree found only in Madinah, Saudi Arabia.

Founded in 1987, the Rotana media conglomerate also incorporates a film production company, a printed magazine, seven music channels, a series of radio stations and a record label. The film division produces and/or acquires up to 45 movies per year, representing 70 percent of the total movie business in the Arab world.

It also operates a leading regional advertising



Rotana's Turki Al Shabanah, Rotana's Elie Kawakabani, VideoAge's Dom Serafini

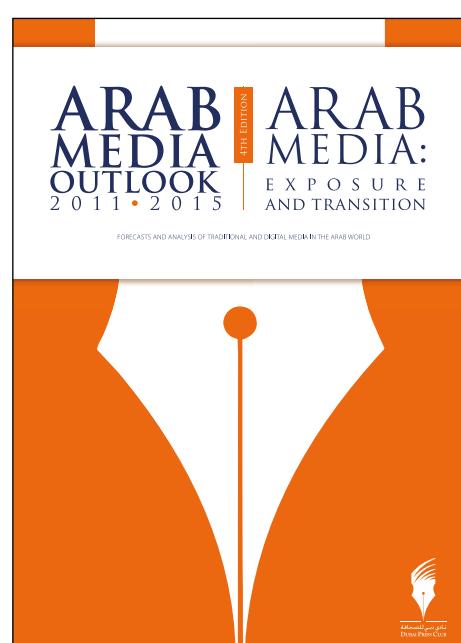


Rotana's Elie Kawakabani, Martine Rahal, Nada Makhzoum, Ayham Zyoud, Waleed Shaalan, Mohamad Al Khamisi, Abdallah Shabanah

sales arm (Rotana Media Services), responsible for advertising sales on its TV channels as well as other media businesses in the region. The Rotana Group has over 1,100 employees located across the Middle East.

Rotana's TV channels, which total 15 — Al Shabanah's responsibility — were created in 2003 and now serve a worldwide audience estimated at 50 million homes. According to Elie Kawakabani, there are about 90 million TVHH in the Middle East and North Africa, and of these 50 million receive satellite FTA TV services, including Rotana's channels.

In terms of program acquisition, Al Shabanah said that they prefer international formats and co-productions, and they acquire lots of product from Turkey. Said Kawakabani, "We have ambitious distribution plans to co-produce movies and events globally. We also always look at acquisition opportunities all over the world, either in media as part of our media group or as part of our holding company." ■



General Facts About Saudi Arabian Television

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is covered by some 540 FTA Arab TV channels. Of those, 40 are considered key channels, of which 10 are the most-watched. These include five Dubai, UAE-based MBC stations and one Rotana station, as well as UAE's Abu Dhabi Al Oula, state-run Saudi TV1, Egypt's Melody and the Qatar-based Al Jazeera. Though private television stations cannot broadcast from Saudi soil, the market is dominated by six major groups including Lebanese Broadcasting Corp.

Digital terrestrial television launched in 2006 and covers some 90 percent of the population, but the DTT market is limited to an estimated one percent of total TVHH.

Satellite dishes are still officially banned in Saudi Arabia, but the country has the second highest satellite TV penetration in the Arab region, at 97 percent of TVHH. There are 85 FTA satellite channels headquartered in Saudi Arabia and two of the largest pan-Arab satellite TV broadcasters, MBC and Rotana, are Saudi owned.

- Size of the yearly ad market: U.S. 854 million, of which just \$34 million is spent on television
- Total TVHH: 4.7 million
- Pay-TV penetration: One million TVHH
- Broadband penetration: Seven percent of TVHH

(Some of the data provided by Arab Media Outlook 2011-2015 by Dubai Press Club and Deloitte)

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“Eventizing” A New U.S. TV Season With Lots of New Series That Travel Int’lly

The 51st annual L.A. Screenings saw an unusual visitor: a TV crew from Canada flew to Los Angeles to shoot a documentary about the event for the CBC network, scheduled to air this coming November. The crew was not allowed on the studio lots, but it managed to capture views from the indies while it trailed reporters from *VideoAge*, which was recognized as the publication that, single-handedly in 1983, created the name “L.A. Screenings” (it was formerly known as the more generic “May Screenings”).

Also unusual was the large number of new series that forced buyers to stay at some studios until 7 p.m. In one case, buyers were even warned that closing time was left open due to the large number of pilots to screen.

For 72 indies exhibiting at the Hyatt Regency Century Plaza Hotel, the L.A. Screenings started on Tuesday, May 13 and ended on Friday, May 16, when the studios—beginning with Fox—started screening for the Latins. The studio screenings ended on Friday, May 23.

The Century Plaza was the exhibition spot for all the major studios (except Fox, which was at the nearby InterContinental Hotel), but only for the Latin contingent, with hotel suites used as hospitality suites or as negotiation offices. The only mini-major actively screening outside the hotel was eOne—which booked meetings at their Beverly Hills offices (and threw a party on May 19)—while Lionsgate, Starz and Viacom all took hotel suites. In addition, Lionsgate organized general screenings for seven straight days at The Paley Center for Media in Beverly Hills.

In terms of after-screenings entertainment, this year the indies surpassed the studios. Disney was the only one that staged a mega-party (on



Disney Media Distribution Latin America's Fernando Barbosa with *VideoAge*'s Dom Serafini



ITV Inter Medya's Beatriz Cea Esteruelas, Annabelle Aramburu

Sunday), while the indies threw a total of five events, starting on Wednesday, May 14 with the opening party by Cisneros, followed on Thursday by Caracol, then on Saturday by Telefilms, on Monday by eOne and on Wednesday by the market DISCOP Africa. On the other hand, KOCCA, the umbrella marketing organization of South Korea, organized a luncheon at the Century Plaza to promote series from four companies to Latin buyers.

Many first-time indie exhibitors set up shop at the Century Plaza to meet with Latin buyers, who tend to stay either there or at the InterContinental. Among the newcomers were 9 Story Entertainment, Armoza Formats, Canal



A co-production between Telemundo Internacional and TVN Chile for the series *Dueños del Paraíso* will be broadcast in the U.S. and Chile. Telemundo will license the series internationally. Pictured l. to. r.: TVN's Ernesto Lombardi, Mauro Valdés Raczyński

13 SudMedia, ITV Inter Medya, KM Services, KOCCA and Tricon Films & Television. Exhibitors came from 18 countries, including Israel, Turkey, Canada and the U.K., in addition to all of Latin America's producing countries.

To help buyers cope with the sub-arctic temperatures in the screening rooms, this year NBCUniversal joined Sony Pictures in providing blankets.

Among the studios and mini-majors, such as Lionsgate, buyers were introduced to over 115 new shows.

(Continued on Page 14)



At Caracol's L.A. Screenings party: Caracol's Karen Juliao, Alejandro Toro, Marcela Montoya, Monica Ramon, Maria Estrella

CRIMINAL MASTERMIND

DEMENTE CRIMINAL



Natpe Europe, Suite 1037, Hilton Prague Hotel

This riveting teleseries, based on true events, tells the chilling story of how a distinguished psychiatrist is exposed as an abusive monster and cold blooded murderer.

 **CISNEROS**
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CisnerosMediaDist.com

(Continued from Page 12)



A film crew from CBC Canada shooting a documentary about the L.A. Screenings interviewed VideoAge's Dom Serafini because he changed the name "May Screenings" to "L.A. Screenings." The first time the L.A. Screenings moniker was ever used was in VideoAge's April 1983 Issue.

As for the number of acquisition executives, the count could easily reach 1,500, scattered among 40 hotels across Los Angeles. Those who canceled were replaced by new buyers. The full head count is somewhat distorted by the fact that some media groups registered with VideoAge a smaller number of buyers than were actually present in L.A. This was done in an effort to avoid criticism from the domestic press, especially in countries that are experiencing economic hardship.

Some Latin buyers notified distributors that, this time, they would focus solely on studio fare and that they could meet instead at MIPCOM in October. Indeed, some Latin broadcasters even reserved accommodations at hotels other than the traditional Century Plaza and InterContinental. However, despite the fact that the hallways on the 17th and 19th floors of the Century Plaza (where most of the distributors' suites are located) looked empty, sellers held one meeting after another inside their suites, prompting repeated visits from walk-ins (such as reporters) who did not set up appointments in advance. As always, the hot spot to meet elusive buyers remained the lobby bar area of the Century Plaza, where everyone converged after 5 p.m., including those L.A.-based distributors who did not rent suites.



The ninth Annual L.A. Screenings Veteran Luncheon at the InterContinental Hotel. It attracted 17 executives, including Colin Davis, former president of MCA Universal.

The Upfronts in New York City proved that with \$2.5 billion in annual ad money for Spanish-language television, the sector is heating up. At the Upfronts, Telemundo (part of NBCUniversal) introduced its new president of the network and production studios, Luis Silberwasser, a former Discovery executive. Univision announced its big leap into football (soccer) rights of top Mexican and U.S. leagues.

Among the major players in U.S. Spanish-language television, Telemundo, Discovery, Estrella TV and Azteca all exhibited at the L.A. Screenings.

At the Upfronts, the Anglo nets came up with a new buzzword to describe the 2014-15 TV season: Eventizing. As NBC Entertainment chairman Bob Greenblatt said, "[we're] trying to eventize everything." Echoed FOX Entertainment chairman Kevin Reilly "We're eventizing our entertainment slate."

Translated into English, "eventize" means that the U.S. nets are trying to get viewers to watch TV live (or at least within the three-day window that advertisers will pay for), to stand out in a TV universe cluttered with hit cable and online shows and to test the staying power of traditional scheduling at a time when "anytime TV" is all the rage.

A continuing trend among advertisers is to shorten spots to reduce costs, while the networks (both broadcast and cable) are increasing the number of commercials per hour.

According to ratings service Nielsen, in 2009 the FTA nets averaged 13.25 minutes of commercial time per hour. In 2013, commercial time increased to 14.15 minutes per hour and 15-second spots increased to 44 percent from 35 percent.

Nielsen also revealed that network schedules are changing in view of large audiences shifting their viewing patterns from Thursdays to Sundays. Until recently, Thursday night was seen as a crucial primetime period for the networks, particularly sought after by advertisers such as car manufacturers and movie studios.

According to Nielsen, an average of 112 million viewers watch TV on Thursday nights, compared to 125 million on Sunday and 120 million on Monday.

Since Tuesday and Wednesday have more viewers, Thursday is now the fifth most watched night of the week.

A final note about audience fragmentation is that, even though U.S. homes now receive on average 189 TV channels, only 17 of those are watched on a regular basis. ■



Telemundo's Esperanza Garay (l.) and Jimena Mejia with Colombia City TV's Lorencita Santamaría (c.)



Fernando Pérez Gavilán and his Televisa Internacional team

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Awarding Excellence is RAI's Prix Italia Mandate

The 66th edition of Prix Italia, sponsored by RAI (the public Italian Radio-Television broadcasting company), is entitled "The Laboratory of Innovation," and will be held September 20-25 in Turin, Italy for the sixth consecutive year. The first edition of the international radio-television and competition event was launched by European public broadcasters in 1948 and was held on the island of Capri.

This year's edition represents a change in Prix Italia's philosophy, since the festival's goal is to open itself to various types of trans-media. This is a reflection of the new Prix Secretary General, Paolo Morawski, who will be directing his first event.

Thus, the Web Prize will be a key event this year, and the programs of the finalists will be presented to the public on September 24, with the awards handed out the following day.

The Prix will also offer a host of master classes and workshops. On Sunday, September 21, the focus will be on the use of social media to update news quality. On Monday, September 22, Web Fiction (drama) will be the central focus, as participants can learn about the best practices from a trans-media perspective. Monday will also play host to the BBC Lecture on RAI's Radio Museum.

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) will be involved in a workshop that will see top experts debate significant topics concerning new technology, including the use of virtual reality and gaming production within the framework of public service television. A cross-media event called "United Voices of Radio Poetry," organized in cooperation with RAI Radio3, will take place on Tuesday evening.

The Opening Concert will be held on Sunday in RAI's Arturo Toscanini Auditorium with RAI's National Symphonic Orchestra. The Public Debate of the Radio, TV and Web will take place on Wednesday, and the Award Ceremony will be held on Thursday.

Earlier this year, VideoAge published an



Prix Italia Secretary General, Paolo Morawski (r.) with the President of Italy, Giorgio Napolitano

interview with Prix Italia's Paolo Morawski in Rome. He discussed his plans for the world's oldest radio/TV and (since 1998) Web festival. The interview was originally published in *VideoAge Daily* at NATPE Miami. Below is an excerpt from the interview:

VAI: *In what direction would you like Prix Italia to move?*

PM: Prix Italia should be a useful event, an innovation laboratory. It should be useful for everyone: for the Prix community, made up of over 100 radio and television organizations from five continents; for RAI, which gives its solid backing to the Prix and for the city and the region hosting the festival each year. The fact that Turin will host Prix Italia is a great boost for us.

VAI: *Your Web competition was born in 1998, basically when the Web was in its infancy. Are there any new developments?*

PM: Yes, for the first time this year the Web competition is open to broadcasters and other media players that are not Prix Italia members.

VAI: *Will the Prix also accept user-generated content?*

PM: Yes, for the EXPO 2015 Special Prize of 4,000 euro, we invited young filmmakers from around the world to send their shorts focusing on "Feeding Our Planet," which is the EXPO's official theme.

VAI: *What aspects of the Prix do you like most?*

PM: I'm especially fascinated by the Prix's two basic personalities: its international character and its creative character. The international contingent at the Prix is represented by the juries, composed of renowned communication experts, who are appointed by the Prix Italia members themselves — from radio, TV and the latest arrivals from the online world.

Since its onset, Prix Italia has been lending its support to diversity and exchanging views. This is yet another aspect of the Prix that I find greatly appealing.

VAI: *Are there any particular territories that you'll be focusing on in order to bring more members and more programs?*

PM: Prix is deeply rooted in Europe and the Mediterranean area. The first goal is to continue getting ahold of the best radio and TV programs and the new multi-platform offerings of the whole Euro-Mediterranean region.

The Prix is historically linked to North America, with the U.S. and Canada, as well as Australia. Our second objective is to foster and renew ties with those important audiovisual production centers where English is the main language.

The Prix's third major aim is to get two giants of communication today — Japan and South Korea — actively involved in our festival.

We're also intent on attracting the productions and talents of South American countries and of Spanish-speaking countries (especially Argentina).

VFM Rides the Gondola

The 71st edition of the Venice Film Festival (VFF) will be held August 27-September 6.

The third edition of VFF's associated *Venice Film Mart (VFM)* will take place August 28-September 3 under the continued direction of Pascal Diot.

New to this edition is the "European Gap-Financing Co-Production Market," intended to help European producers secure the final financing for their projects. The VFM will offer 16 select projects (eight European and eight more from Italy alone) the opportunity to close their international financing through selected financiers, producers, distributors, sales agents and film funds.

Also new is the "Italian Cinema Industry Focus," a series of events and panels to highlight Italian movie producers and distributors.

Grand Prix For Advertising

Italian chocolate manufacturers Ferrero received the Grand Jury Prize at the 27th annual Italian Advertising Strategies Grand Prix, which recognized the best advertising campaigns of 2013.

The event was held in late May at the National Theater in Milan. Other winners included TV personality Belen Rodriguez and football (soccer) star Javier Zanetti. By Yuri Serafini in Milan



This year, Prix Italia will undoubtedly be "looking southwards," to the Mediterranean, because audiovisual production is on the rise in the Mediterranean and the Mediterranean attracts us because of its "storytelling."

VAI: *During the past administration, the Prix was more academically inclined. Is there a chance that the Prix might return to a more pragmatic event?*

PM: The festival is entitled: "The Innovation Laboratory." The idea is to be guided by those experimenting and/or those who have already made innovative programs and services.

Prix Italia has already come to an agreement on this with the EBU. In September, we are setting up the "Prix Italia-EBU Vision 2020 Laboratory." Our slogan is going to be: "Innovation is Now." The aim is for everyone to return home with two or three good ideas or "best practices" in order to find inspiration. ■



A woman stands in a modern living room, holding a pool cue. In the foreground, the lower half of a giant horse is visible, wearing a saddle and leather chaps. The woman is positioned between the horse's legs, looking towards the camera. The room has a brick wall, a bookshelf, and a lamp.

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History and Crime: Italy's New Imports In the Land of History and Crime

By Dom Serafini

Italy can be considered a hotbed of rich history dating back 3,000 years, as well as the breeding ground of organized crime since the 1850s. With these kinds of material riches, it was natural for a television company to bring two niche channels about history and crime to Italy.

This task fell to the New York City-based A+E Networks, which in 2003 launched the History Channel and in 2013 the Crime + Investigation Channel (C+I), both based in Rome.

But one could ask, "Why did it take so long?" since History Channel was launched in the U.S. and internationally in 1995 and C+I started in Australia in 2005, a country with a much lower crime index than Italy.

The answer was provided by A+E Networks' EVP Sean Cohan during an interview with *VideoAge* published last April: "Preparing to launch a channel is a time-consuming proposition. Before launching in Italy, we were in talks with the Italian platform for four years."

In effect, a history channel already existed in the country, launched in 2000 by RAI, Italy's state broadcaster as part of RAI Educational, and in 2009 it was spun off as RAI Storia on digital terrestrial TV channel 54. In addition, other Italian-language channels (such as Focus and Discovery) occasionally run historic documentaries and there are a few shows about history on RAI and Mediaset's FTA networks.

However, explained Sherin Salvetti, general manager of A+E Networks Italy, "History is the first and only HD channel dedicated to history. Its programming offer is a mix of history-themed documentaries, character-driven male-oriented factual entertainment series and docu-dramas. RAI Storia, which depends on RAI's archives, runs more classical history shows, mainly black and white archive-based documentaries. In terms of demo target, History has a younger and upper scale demo." But she added, "Only History and RAI Storia are vertically themed."

C+I is another intelligent affiliation with Italy, a country with four major organized crime families in the regions of Sicily (Cosa Nostra), Calabria ('Ndrangheta), Puglia (Santa Corona Unita) and in the city of Naples (Camorra). In addition, in Italy there are an estimated 1,000 unresolved criminal cases per year, representing 40 percent of all crimes in the country. And this it is without counting the 46 current members of Parliament who are under investigation and three who have been convicted. This is compared to 66 members of the previous Parliament who were investigated, plus 50 who were convicted.

Reported Salvetti: "If I look back at the first six months of the [C+I] channel, during which we launched a campaign against violence on



Sherin Salvetti joined A+E Networks Italy as GM in 2003 and reports to London-based Dean Possenniskie, managing director, EMEA, who, in turn, reports to A+E Networks' EVP Sean Cohan in New York City. Previously, Salvetti worked at RAI, National Geographic and when the channel became part of FOX International Channels Italy, she served as SVP.

women, I can forecast a future really full of local events. Just to mention what's coming next, we are working on a special on one of the biggest and most mysterious murders in this country." She also said, "C+I is only a baby, but we are proud to say that Italian content was in the schedule since the very first days with two original productions: *Secrets, Lies and Murders* and a local version of *Beyond Scared Straight*."

On the History Channel, Salvetti said that Italian content, "in terms of volume is not a big figure, but Italian history has a big weight on the

channel in terms of production investments. [In addition] the biggest marketing campaigns are dedicated to promoting our Italian originals." Salvetti explained, "We commission programs to Italian production companies. In the past [for History] we have been producing multi-season, long-running documentary series, a genre I would define as 'classical' with an edge (like *Forbidden History of Italy* and *Murders*). Recently, we turned into more ambitious miniseries with more re-enactments and higher production values."

Both History and C+I are exclusive to pay-TV platform Sky Italia (part of News Corp group) and available to 4.7 million satellite TV subscribers. While History is on Sky channel 407, C+I is on channel 118 because C+I is distributed with the Sky Entertainment package (EPG 100 onward) and History is part of the documentary package (EPG 400 onward).

Sky Pubblicitá, Sky's internal ad sales team, sells advertising on both channels. According to Salvetti, C+I, "had a great start in the market and History confirmed the power of its brand and it's programming, but we want to see the ad sales revenue grow in time."

Both History and C+I are 24/7 channels with vertical schedules and vertical "PT blocks." She elaborated that "PT blocks" mean "two to three hour vertical blocks of the same series with different episodes scheduled back-to-back or a themed night. Our schedule is not made of repeated blocks, but it is built on different titles scheduled in different time slots according to Italian viewing habits."

Detailed Salvetti, "[At History] we tend to premiere on weekdays and offer viewers a second chance with repeats on the weekend, mainly in daytime. [C+I] has a stripped daytime and vertical 'PT' themed blocks." In addition she reported, "Monday to Friday we run stripped series in significant time slots."

In conclusion, History and C+I represent American ingenuity that knows how to valorize the assets of a country such as Italy, leveraging both its resources and talents: elements that, ironically, Italians tend to discard. Another example is provided by the success of American and British cooking shows and formats on Italian television. These tend to originate from creative people, who grew up with McDonald's and fish and chips and are now on television teaching Italians how to cook the Italian dishes that are popular worldwide. 

"In terms of volume [Italian content] is not a big figure, but Italian history has a big weight on the channel in terms of production investments."
— Sherin Salvetti

A dense, hand-drawn collage of various media and communication-related terms in red, green, and black ink, including BRAINSTORMING, COMMUNITY, COMPETITION, CONTENT, EXCELLENCE, EXPLORE, FUTURE, HASHTAG, INNOVATION, LABORATORY, NETWORK, PROJECT, QUALITY, and many others.

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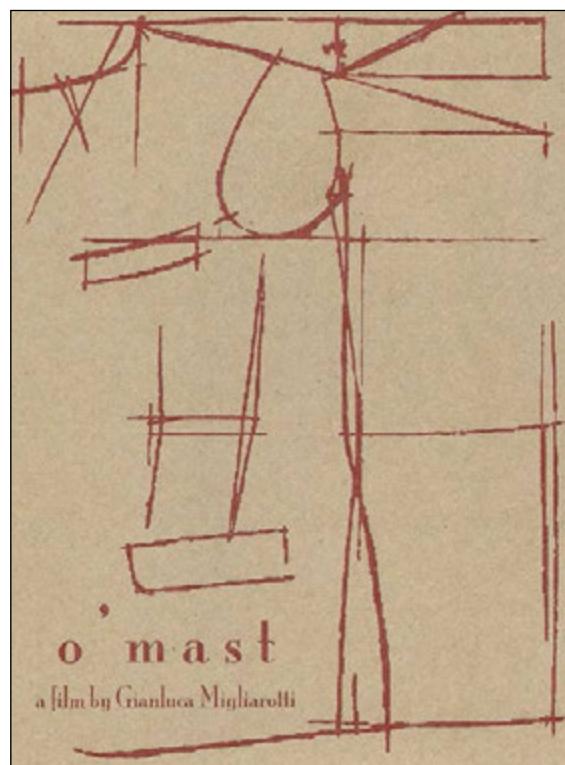
commonplace as companies like Vice and Red Bull create high quality and engaging productions almost entirely financed by brands looking for exposure (or, in Red Bull's case, themselves). The content need not even be directly related to the particular company coughing up the dough: the important thing is that the image a brand is looking to project is communicated via the content being produced. Entire web series have been created with this in mind.

FremantleMedia in the U.K. and MTV and HBO in the U.S., for example, have teamed up with Brooklyn-based Vice — distributor of branded content, now stuck mostly on social media and the web, with traditional broadcasting strategies — while companies like Discovery also look to expand into the field. One group of media companies, however, is absent from this picture: European national broadcasters. Victims of austerity measures (just look at Greece's ERT), one would think they would be looking everywhere for additional financing, yet this is not the case.

Let's take Italy's RAI for example. Pending the most recent reforms ("branded" by McKinsey this time around), the company will be reorganized in five broad macro areas, the number of internal departments will be reduced, and, presumably, the funds available for local production will evaporate further. This needn't be a problem, however: in the country that calls itself "Il Paese Griffato," or "The Designer State," there shouldn't be a problem finding brands looking to project an "image" in order to create an emotive relationship with their high-income targets, especially as internal demand for goods in Italy has collapsed over recent years and producers and distributors can move to offer some "international distribution" for brands.

Gianluca Migliarotti, an Italian director/producer active in branded content, offered his explanation as to why this is the case. "The 'Griffes' [big brands] aren't necessarily our friends," he said, "Although I was more than happy to create a documentary for Vitale Barberis Canonoci [showcasing one of the most successful Italian cloth production companies], and am now working on a project for Pitti Immagine, the problem with most large brands is that they don't have the right mindset to create good content, and no one is willing to explain it to them. Those few times you do, they have no concept of distribution."

Migliarotti's complaint as a filmmaker is symptomatic of a wider problem: Large communication firms, not media groups like RAI or Mediaset, dominate branded content in Italy. Often, the emphasis is on quantity of people reached, not quality, spending large budgets to promote videos on Facebook that are little more than slideshows. Other times, potential clients are bombarded with a continuous stream of pictures and text via social networks: the evolution of spam. This clearly defies the trend of branded content getting longer, more elaborate, and becoming a stand-alone destination for viewers, as exemplified by Vice's new web-



The DVD cover of Gianluca Migliarotti's branded documentary *O'Mast*, about Neapolitan tailors

channel "Munchies," whose serialized content runs, on average, for 30 minutes. Red Bull even makes a profit from worldwide distribution of the content they create.

The situation is made even more absurd by the fact that content from Italy, branded or not, can be made successful with very little effort. If Paolo Sorrentino can shoot *The Great Beauty*, an Oscar-winning movie that adds little more than an existentialist storyline to a Fellini film remake — about the modern Roman upper class being the modern Roman upper class — then equally engaging content can come out of countless other aspects of Italian life, which seem banal to Italians, but captivating to foreign audiences.

Migliarotti witnessed this firsthand. Upon the completion of his 2011 film *O'Mast*, a documentary on traditional Neapolitan tailoring, he was approached unsolicited by a distributor in Hong Kong after a disastrous pre-production where financing promised by an Italian state agency charged with promoting Naples collapsed after the politician in charge fell from grace.

This experience is not anecdotal. Recently, newspapers all over Italy have reported how the public sector has a tendency to decide who to pay and who not to pay based on cronyism and convenience, regardless of services rendered. The audiovisual sector is no exception. Indeed, on occasion the treasury has even recorded delays in transferring collection from mandatory license fees to RAI.

This is another problem facing Italian branded content: the vast majority of businesses — the motor of the Italian economy — are small- and medium-sized family-owned enterprises that rely on professional associations or state agencies for what little promotion they receive. The aforementioned Neapolitan tailors who construct unique suits characterized by high armholes and light fabrics (and most importantly, are skilled at

"The problem with most large brands is that they don't have the right mindset to create good content, and no one is willing to explain it to them. Those few times you do, they have no concept of distribution."

—Gianluca Migliarotti

hiding their clients' physical defects) provide a ready example: even the most renowned master tailors tend to have three to eight employees. This is a trend that repeats itself all around Italy. Italian journalist Gian Antonio Stella wrote that, when agents of Japanese motorcycle giant Yamaha set out to spy on little Italian competitor Aprilia, the agents reported that they had been sent to the wrong address. They couldn't believe a major competitor operated out of a garage in a little Northern town called Noale.

Most producers would agree that the best solution is for large brands to fund branded content about the more rustic and artisanal aspects of Italian life. Migliarotti believes the power of values communicated would transcend any lack of visibility for their product. In essence, style and subtlety over visual bombardment.

Indeed, a philosophy of subtlety is already the dominant trend in more developed markets. This year, Vodafone, a U.K.-based cellphone provider with operations in all of Europe, launched a web-based series called *#Firsts*, spanning all major social media platforms, as well as a well produced website of its own. In every video, the presence of Vodafone products is scarce. The series has yielded very positive results for Vodafone, and season two is supposedly in the works.

However, *#Firsts* was not the brainchild of a studio. *#Firsts* was produced and launched by AKQA, the digital arm of WPP, a large advertising agency based in London. Although this is most definitely not the case in Italy, more innovative markets are seeing increasingly high quality content coming from ad agencies. This, coupled with the lackluster interest of traditional producers, begs the question: When big and small ad agencies are able to produce content to rival studios, both in Italy and the rest of the world, will it be too late? By Yuri Serafini in Milan, Italy

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(Continued from Cover)



eOne's Tess Charman

to the question of emerging markets. Benmore's views as to which markets offer the greatest potential are "motivated by our assessment of the market's economic prosperity and stability. Additionally, a territory with a diverse and robust slate of channels competing for airtime indicates a market offering solid future business potential," he said.

Tess Charman of Canada, U.S. and U.K.-based eOne concurred with Benmore, noting, "it is important to look at the proliferation of channels in order to assess the opportunity for placing content, while also assessing whether there are opportunities to place international content on major terrestrial channels, or whether the focus of international acquisition is more toward basic cable/DTT/pay channels." Although she said, "all emerging markets are vital to the progression of our business and eOne is fully aware all these territories present important opportunities to grow our audiences."

Specifically addressing the emerging markets within the orbit of NATPE Europe, Marielle Zuccarelli, managing director of Content Distribution at A+E Networks, said that, at the moment, their policy is to "look for sales to pan-regional channels or to Russia and the CIS." This is because of the low fees paid by many of the channels in the region's emerging markets, although she also stressed that, "We have a large sales team that spends a lot of time on the road, so this is not a question of sales resources, it is more a question of business sense." Yet, Zuccarelli pointed to Bulgaria and Romania as regional markets "beginning to reach a level at which we will be looking to deal on an individual basis. Romania in particular is becoming a good market for TV movies and non-scripted formats, and, of course, Russia is also significant."

Zuccarelli, however, has no doubt that the emerging markets of the NATPE Europe orbit "will develop into an area of real significance," and, for her, the importance of regionally specific markets such as NATPE Europe is that "they allow us to present an important presence

"A territory with a diverse and robust slate of channels competing for airtime indicates a market offering solid future business potential."
— Mark Benmore

in the region, and, additionally, our significant presence at such markets allows us to develop clever ways of working on a more individual basis with regional markets that are starting to become individually viable."

For eOne's Charman, "trade shows offer some of the best ways to meet new potential partners in one consolidated trip, which is why attending key focused markets such as NATPE Europe and Kiev Media Week is so important to the growth of our business." Although Charman accepts that "an individual territory trip is hugely beneficial as it enables you to get valuable face time connecting with the local buyers," she is equally convinced that, "providing programming updates and maintaining regular contact ensure broadcasters are kept abreast of all new content."

Content's Benmore said, "key to establishing and developing strong position in an



Content Television and Digital's Mark Benmore

emerging market is understanding the major broadcasters, their market position, audience and programming needs and corporate goals. This allows you to assess which product is right for which broadcaster, and to therefore present your content to each broadcaster in the best possible light."

For these reasons, Benmore believes both a presence at markets such as NATPE Europe and visits to individual territories play a role in the development of emerging markets. "Market-specific trips are valuable as they confirm to the broadcaster that our company is keen to do business in the region, while territory-focused trips are important for developing long-term relationships and creating the time for in-depth discussions, allowing us to tailor our offerings and create bespoke packages for individual broadcasters."

These are sentiments echoed by eOne's Charman, who believes that the effective development of emerging markets depends upon "understanding local broadcaster requirements, maintaining regular contact and holding ongoing discussions about local trends and program requirements, which allow for the development of tailored pitches of relevant shows."

While the emerging markets of NATPE Europe and other regions of the world, such as Africa, the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, continue to grow in importance to the international TV content distribution community, they do present particular challenges. But these are challenges that — with the proper approach, time and patience — can be overcome, delivering the potential for strong future growth. By Bob Jenkins in London



A+E Networks' Marielle Zuccarelli



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Prague began with the “notion that everything in life needs to be freshened at times. There’s an optimism that surrounds the market’s move to Prague.” He added, “We loved Budapest, but Prague...is a wonderful city that is easy to get to and a huge financial trade center. It’s a vibrant place that everyone loves to visit and spend time doing business in.”

Like Hungary, the Czech Republic has a few visa requirements, which concern participants from countries like Colombia, China and Russia. However NATPE is providing assistance in that regard.

The Czech market is still suite-based and it will be held at the Hilton Prague Hotel on the Vltava River, beginning June 23. Once again this year, the studios will hold screenings of the new U.S. TV season series on Monday and the first part of Tuesday (see related story on page 28). The market floor will also open on Tuesday, and the event will run through June 26. While the suites will be clustered on the first floor, 64 viewing boxes, 30 tables and six stands will all be housed at the Market Level of the hotel, which is not to be confused with the Hilton Prague Old Town. The layout of the new venue resembles that of the Sofitel in Budapest, NATPE Europe’s former market venue.

Last year, the market housed 46 exhibitors in the suites and 106 in the basement of the Sofitel Hotel, catering to some 400 buyers.

Cesar Diaz of Cisneros Media Distribution (CMD) said, “For the NATPE organization, the change of venue is a huge undertaking, and there’s much anticipation, as well as high expectations.” He added, “Change is always an important premise for a better outlook. Additionally, change also brings a level of uncertainty and uneasiness. Although we heard a lot of complaints when the change of the host city was announced, I have only gotten a sense of excitement from many in the industry as we get closer to the actual dates. There is no doubt that Prague is...just as historic as Budapest.”

Marielle Zuccarelli of A+E Networks is “hopeful that the location change will give the market a boost of excitement and energy.”

Likewise, Telemundo Internacional’s Melissa Pillow said, “Prague, being a more easily accessible city for most attendees, gives an advantage to this trade show...perhaps a change in location will recharge the market and spark the interest of new attendees.”

Tess Charman of Entertainment One Television International (eOne) believes that the change “will present a few initial challenges such as getting to know a new layout, however, as long as the market is well attended and organized then there is no reason why it should not be as successful a venue as Budapest. Prague is a beautiful city after all,” she said.

Like Zuccarelli and Pillow, Meggan Kimberley, the lone executive attending from Starz Worldwide Distribution, is hoping the change of venue will be an improvement. “The market needed some freshening up, so the change in venue will be very positive all around. My expectations are to see our usual buyers from the

“We loved Budapest, but Prague...is a wonderful city that is easy to get to and a huge financial trade center. It’s a vibrant place that everyone loves to visit and spend time doing business in.”
— Rod Perth

region and have a little more time to explore their needs as well as the current and ever-changing market conditions of their countries. We also hope to meet new buyers who do not typically come to MIP-TV or MIPCOM.”

Steven Turney of Power is taking a wait-and-see approach, but does not think the “impact will be comparable to the increased accessibility offered by its U.S. counterpart’s move to Miami, though it may lead the way to an increased attendance from CIS territories.”

“We are always happy to explore new places,” said Anat Lewinsky of Armoza Formats. “We are well established in Hungary and are excited for the new location, which will further enable us to deepen our connection with our Czech partners as well as those across the region.”

Organizers and NATPE participants aren’t the only ones excited about the move. “The city of Prague is ecstatic over this because we are bringing over 1,000 media decision makers to their city in one event, and it’s never happened before in the history of Prague,” Perth said.

The NATPE organization has worked hard to increase attendance. “We’re reaching out and pulling buyers from countries that never attended before.” Last month, Perth told VideoAge that 36 countries had already signed up for the market. “Buyers and exhibitors from Poland tended to stay home, but this year, we are having a salute to Polish Programming Luncheon on Wednesday, June 25.” Polish television is growing and is now one of Europe’s largest TV markets, with 80 percent of homes currently accessing pay-TV via cable or satellite and over 20 DTT channels available, so naturally, it makes sense to try to attract Polish exhibitors and buyers to NATPE Europe.

Additionally, there will be participants from Hungary, the Ukraine, Russia, the U.K., France and, of course, the Czech Republic.

Starz’s Kimberley noted that her company is “interested in the Balkans, as this region has more growth potential than some of the



Starz's Meggan Kimberley

others.” And she was enthusiastic about filling her appointment schedule, projecting that it would be 80-90 percent full. Plus, “I make an effort to find the time for walk-ins, even if only for a few minutes to make some kind of connection,” she said.

“Our goal is always to continue extending our reach internationally, and strengthening our position as a leading supplier of premium content in as many territories as possible. During NATPE Europe, we will have a particular emphasis on reaching out to the Balkans, the Baltics and Romania,” A+E’s Zuccarelli said.

For Armoza Formats, “Hungary and Turkey are strong format territories. Additional countries in the region that are beginning to open up more to formats include the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania, who we are increasingly working with, while other markets such as Estonia are also interested in international formats,” said Lewinsky.

NATPE has announced a special Producer’s Day Pass, available for producers, development executives and service providers who wish to attend the Co-Production Summit, but not the entire market. Perth said that at \$200, the pass is “an unbelievable bargain.”

To facilitate meetings between indies and buyers, “NATPE has invested heavily in NATPE Navigator, a customized, personalized connection service between buyers and sellers who have unique programming and content goals. It’s like a dating service, it knows your profile, and it knows what you’re looking for, so that’s a huge scheduling advantage that helps indies feel less lonely at the market,” Perth explained.

Yet, this resource may not be fully tapped. “To be honest,” said CMD’s Diaz, “we haven’t had the opportunity to get accustomed to using the Navigator software. Hopefully, for this market, we will make it a point.” Starz’s Kimberley hasn’t used the tool yet either, but she said, “Many buyers will find it especially useful, which benefits us all.”

“We’re about as excited about NATPE Europe and the move to Prague as anything we’ve done; it’s with great enthusiasm that we want to prove that Prague can make a difference, and NATPE continues to be invested in the region to make a great market,” Perth concluded. *By Sara Alessi in New York City* 

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New U.S. TV Season Pilots Screened For CEE Buyers Now Seen as a Plus

For the fourth consecutive year, NATPE Europe will open its doors to the major U.S. studios, allowing them to use the marketplace for one of their road trip stops across various countries. The screenings will showcase the pilots of the new U.S. TV season to CEE buyers who did not attend last month's L.A. Screenings (see related front cover story about NATPE Europe).

When the screenings started at NATPE Europe (originally the market was called DISCOP and later NATPE Budapest), some exhibiting indies resented the "intrusion," reasoning that the studios would syphon off buyers from the market floor, since the screenings were held outside the trade show facilities. And because of that some exhibitors vowed not to return. To solve that problem, NATPE Europe organizers have arranged to hold some of the screenings inside the Hilton Prague Hotel — NATPE Europe's official venue — with only two studios (CBSSI and Warner Bros.) screening outside at a local theater. Disney and Sony Pictures Television will exhibit but will not screen.

Warner Bros. will hold screenings on Monday, June 23, the day before the market's official opening day. The screenings will continue on Tuesday with CBSSI, NBCUniversal and Twentieth Century Fox Television. CBSSI, Fox and NBCUniversal will also rent suites at the Hilton Prague Hotel.

CBSSI will be showing about nine new pilots on the morning of Tuesday, June 24 at the Atlas Cinemas, a five-minute walk from the Hilton, the same theater in which Warner Bros. will be screening on June 23.

Also on the 24, on the opening day of exhibition (which starts at 10 a.m.), NBCUniversal will be screening in three rooms of the hotel's Market Level: the Roma, Vienna and Madrid, which can each accommodate up to 50 people. Fox will be screening in the Amsterdam room on the Lobby Level — one floor above the Market Level — which can also accommodate up to 50 people.

Today, the studio screenings are mostly seen as



L. to r.: Lori McCreary and Morgan Freeman, executive producers of CBSSI's *Madam Secretary*, Armando Nuñez, CBS Global Distribution Group president and CEO, with the stars of the new series, Téa Leoni and Tim Daly during the L.A. Screenings

a magnet to attract more buyers to the market. In this regard, Rod Perth, president and CEO of the Los Angeles-based NATPE, said, "It's a huge advantage for buyers in Romania or the Czech Republic who work for a company interested in screening the Hollywood shows, when the size of the business doesn't allow them to get to the L.A. Screenings. We offer the first look at those studio shows and content for those buyers."

Tess Charman of Entertainment One Television International finds that the "studio screenings allow indies to gauge upcoming trends and the next big hits. They are an imperative part of our business." However, Cesar Diaz of Cisneros Media Distribution said, "Frankly, I feel there's a bit of a lack of synergy between the studios and the organizers; that has proven to be a hindrance for the indies. Let's hope for better things to come, especially at this upcoming market."



At the L.A. Screenings NBCUniversal's Belinda Menendez with (l. to r.) Monte Carlo TV's Carlos Novaro, Unitel's Ernesto Monasterio and Alberto Wichtendahl



Sony Pictures TV International's Keith Le Goy and Alexander Marin, with the cast of the series *En la boca del lobo* and *Señorita Pólvora* during the L.A. Screenings

On the other hand, road trips such as, for instance, the one to London after the L.A. Screenings or to Prague for NATPE Europe, are important for the American studios to showcase the new U.S. TV season to buyers who did not attend the screenings in Hollywood, especially executives from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, thus making the Prague event very important to both studios and buyers alike.

Another consideration is that, this year, the studios had enormous new content requests from the U.S. TV networks (a total of 67 new pilots among the six majors, plus Lionsgate and HBO) to the point of requiring extended screenings for buyers in Los Angeles, which caused some split-scheduling problems and resulted in a few missed screenings among buyers. A list of all 115 pilots (not all viewed during the L.A. Screenings) can be found in VideoAge's L.A. Screenings 2014 Guide.



This year, both NBCUniversal and Sony Pictures TV Int'l provided blankets to keep buyers warm inside their very cold screening rooms at the L.A. Screenings

**Emerging vs.
Falling States**

An emerging country such as India is setting the safety standard for the world. India's civil aviation regulator has instructed airlines to track all aircrafts in real time, a decision the regulator said was prompted by the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370. The directives will apply to both passenger and cargo planes. It is unclear why — with global satellite and radar monitoring, — there are still "blind spots" in the skies.

A falling state, such as the U.S. state of Georgia, now permits people to carry guns even at airports. The City of Atlanta Legal Department has informed Atlanta's mayor and Atlanta's airport general manager that persons with valid Georgia Weapons Licenses can now carry guns in the non-sterile areas of the airport. The question remains: Will airports in more safety-conscious states allow flights from Atlanta to land there?

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My 2¢

International TV executives have to put up with market organizers' bureaucracy, client/supplier relationships, poor hotel services and culture shock. But worst of all are the unavoidable airlines. Here's why.



I recently overheard an American tourist (flying back from a cruise) at the Delta check-in counter at Nice airport (code name NCE) say: "We're in Nice, they're French; they don't have to be nice." Now, I know that Americans have an attitude toward the French because at restaurants and hotels waiters and porters don't like to listen to others' (or tell their own) life stories, but nastiness is not a French thing; it's an airline requirement. And in Nice, Delta employees are the ones who don't have to be nice.

I used to know an American sales agent for Air France who was extremely nice until he reached the airport, at which time he suddenly changed his attitude and became irritable and grumpy.

In terms of nastiness, the airline industry is unique in the sense that no other transport sector can match it: be it car rental, taxi, train, ship, bus or horse-drawn carriage.

What's also irritating is that the entire airline service chain is nasty, from ticketing to airport security, from food on board to the cramped seating space, from late arrivals to lost luggage, from incentives like frequent flier miles to seat upgrades, from penalties to compensation, from overbooking to standbys, from rebooking to last-minute overcharges, to just plain inconveniences.

It just so happened that at NCE the elevator to the business class lounge was broken, prompting the same lady I had encountered at the check-in counter to comment to an airline employee who clearly did not want to be there, "Do you see, they want to kill us?" after walking up some 10 steps carrying her luggage. I was afraid to tell the "poor" lady (who, after all was traveling business class) to brace for arrival at terminal T4 in New York City at JFK Airport, which has 41 gates and usually requires travelers to schlep their luggage for about 1.5 km before reaching Passport Control, then another 200 meters before reaching the taxi stand, which usually has a 45-minute wait time.

In terms of security, the airline industry ranks below any other transportation service. A case in point is the disappearance of Malaysia Flight MH370 from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing that occurred because of radar "blind spots," despite worldwide satellite surveillance and military airspace control from the U.S., China and Russia, and the inexplicable triple deactivation of aircraft identification signals. If it were so easy to elude radar, the U.S. wouldn't need stealth bombers at \$929 million per aircraft.

The airlines are also unique because any other business that pulled the same shtick would be under the radar of a slew of alphabet-like U.S. government agencies from ACF (Administration for Children and Families) to TD (Transportation Department). Apparently, airlines are different and they seem to only fall under the "care" of agencies from AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) to YDF (Youth Development Fund).

An airline consultant explained that because of WTO requirements the U.S. government couldn't help the sector the way it helped the car industry — it allowed the airlines free reign.

The airlines' business model is also unique. In other forms of transport, travelers pay less for short distances and more for longer ones. With airlines, consumers pay more for short trips and less for longer connecting flights. It's like a taxi ride around the block costing \$10, while a trip across town only costs \$5.

Then, in order to save fuel, aircraft must reduce speeds. On a recent NCE to JFK flight the plane was traveling at 458 MPH with a very low head wind. A F1 car could basically run faster! The flight took over 10 hours from takeoff to landing, and in the process, the airline saved about \$5,000 in fuel costs (and still charged fuel surcharges), and kept passengers onboard for one hour longer than normal, which is no pleasure at all.

Nowadays, it is not unusual for an uneventful overseas trip to take over 17 hours door-to-door, when in the past it took just 12. This is also considering that late landings lead to occupied or obstructed gate areas, crowded arrival halls and, often, increased commuter traffic on the way home from the airport.

Do I see improvements in the near future? Are there any news stories reporting that airlines are lowering ticket costs, improving travel time, widening seats, offering better meals and increasing frequent flier rewards? No? Well, there's your answer!

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